

January 8, 2001

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STATE'S TOP TWO EDUCATION OFFICIALS MEET TO DISCUSS PROPOSED UNIVERSITY ADMISSION STANDARDS

BATON ROUGE -- Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie and Superintendent of Education Cecil Picard met to discuss the Board of Regents' proposed new admission standards for the state's public four-year universities and their implications for the state's public elementary and high schools.

By the year 2005, all state universities in Louisiana will be required to adopt admission standards for new entering freshmen, according to a proposed statewide master plan now being developed by the Louisiana Board of Regents, the coordinating and policy-making agency for all public postsecondary education in Louisiana.

Savoie and Picard, who met Jan. 8, agreed that the Regents' plan to establish admission standards at state universities is a critical step in reforming public education in Louisiana at all levels.

"The purpose of having admissions standards," Savoie said, "is to create an environment that will help students be more successful once they reach college and to focus the resources of our colleges and universities on their primary missions. This is an ambitious plan that will change the nature of higher education in Louisiana."

Speaking for elementary and secondary education, Picard threw his support behind the proposal. "This is what P through 16 education [grades pre-kindergarten through year 16] is all about," he said. "The Regents' plan gives credibility to the whole P through 16 concept and reinforces the core college preparatory curriculum at the high school level. In five or six years, we'll have more students graduating from high school and going into the appropriate level of

postsecondary education. The timing of this plan is perfectly tied to our elementary and secondary education reforms.”

On Jan. 4 the Board of Regents unveiled its proposed new admission standards and the creation of three selective admissions categories at the state’s four-year universities.

Admissions standards for entering freshmen, beginning in the year 2005, would be based successful completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum and other components such as over-all grade-point average and ACT composite scores. Regents also are considering where students ranked in their graduating class as a possible admissions criteria.

Proposed admissions requirements now under discussion are:

Selective I -- high school grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 3.0 and completion of TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal to 25, completion of TOPS high school core curriculum and a minimum 2.0 GPA.

Selective II -- high school GPA greater than or equal to 2.5 and completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal to 23, completion of TOPS high school core curriculum and a minimum 2.0 GPA.

Selective III -- high school GPA greater than or equal to 2.0 and completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal to 20 and completion of TOPS high school core curriculum.

Students not meeting these requirements could attend the state’s open-admissions community and technical college campuses for associate degrees, work-skills training, college remedial education or to meet transfer requirements to enter four-year institutions at a later date.

“Enrolling in the state’s evolving community and technical college system,” Savoie said, “is a cost effective way for the state to provide greater access to postsecondary education at a more affordable cost to students. In the case of students who initially do not meet admission standards to one of our four-year institutions, we will provide an environment through our community and technical college campuses where students can be successful.”

Picard said the plan creates greater cooperation at all levels of public education. “In the end,” he said, “there will be a seamless web of education for Louisiana’s students. I look forward to collaborating with Commissioner Savoie in this effort.”

The Regents plan to hold a public hearing on its proposed new postsecondary education

master plan, including admission standards, in early March. The final plan is scheduled to be up for board adoption at its March 22 meeting.
